tries and organisations of the Government. The recommendations of the Committee are being processed in consultation with the various Ministries, Departments, Planning Commission and the Spices Board.

Containing Tobacco Farming

791. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that approximately 60 lakh farmers and labourers are engaged in tobacco farming in the country, at present;

(b) whether it is a fact that Government are considering a proposal to discourage the cultivation of tobacco in the country whereas its exports earning is over Rs. 500 crores for the country;

(c) whether it is also a fact that there is a great scope for increasing its exports by growing more Virginia and Burleys tobacco; and

(d) if so, the steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) As per Tobocca Board's estimates about 50 lakh farmers and labourers are engaged in tobacco farming.

(b) Tobacco Board regulates the production of only FCV tobacco. The crop size of FCV tobacco is fixed after taking into account domestic requirements and the international demand and supply scenario.

(c) In view of the large carry-over stock world wide the scope of significant increase in export of tobacco in the current year (does not appear likely) is limited.

(d) Tobacco Board has been adopting the following measures for export promotion:—

1. Standing trade delegations to various select markets.

2. Participation in International Exhibitions.

3. Aggressive publicity in overseas markets.

4. Pursuing issues of exports of Indian tobacco and tobacco products with Governments of importing countries through Joint Committee Meetings.

5. Undertaking packaging developments for products like Bidi, Hookah Tobacco Paste with the help of Indian Institute of Foreign Trade.

6. Development of high quality tobaccos.

Impact of Gatt on Commerce

792. SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKATRAMAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the exact impact on commerce after the signing of GATT agreement;

(b) whether the impact is encouraging or discouraging;

(c) what steps Government intend to take for boosting commerce; and

(d) what is the percentage of commerce prior to GATT and after entering into GATT agreement?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Estimates made by the World Bank, OECD and the GATT Secretariat, show that the implementation of the Uruguay Round Agreement would add between US $ 213 and US $ 274 billion annually to the world income. The GATT Secretariat's estimate of the overall trade impact is that the level of merchandise trade in goods would be higher by US $745 billion in the year 2005 than it otherwise would have been.